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SUBJECT: EU UNEMPLOYMENT UP TO 8.9 PERCENT; EURO ZONE RATE UP TO 9.5 PERCENT

¶1. SUMMARY. The latest EU unemployment data as released by the EU Commission's Statistical Office (EUROSTAT) on July 2 confirmed a broad pattern of deterioration on the EU labor markets. The aggregate unemployment rate for the EU-27 soared to 8.9 percent in May 2009 (up from 8.7 in April). Unemployment in the euro zone (the 16 EU countries currently participating in the euro) increased to 9.5 in April 2009, also up by 0.2 percentage point over the previous month. END SUMMARY.

¶2. With seasonal adjustment and compensation for differences in national statistical methods, the unemployment rate for the EU-27 stood at 8.9 percent in May 2009, up from 8.7 percent in April 2009 (revised upward from initial 8.6 estimate) and from 6.8 percent in May 2008. The unemployment rate for the euro zone stood at 9.5 percent in May 2009, up from 9.3 percent in April 2009 (revised upward from initial 9.2 estimate) and from 7.4 percent in May 2008 (comparison based on EU-16; euro zone membership effective in May 2009).

¶3. The lowest monthly rates among those compiled by EUROSTAT from the EU-27 for May 2009 were recorded in the Netherlands (3.2 percent) and Austria (4.3 percent), while the highest rates were recorded in Spain (18.7 percent), Latvia (16.3 percent) and Estonia (15.6 percent).

¶4. EUROSTAT data showed all countries among the EU-27 recording an increase in their unemployment rate over a year, some showing quite a sharp rise. The lowest increases took place in Germany (from 7.4 percent to 7.7 percent) and the Netherlands (from 2.8 percent to 3.2 percent). The sharpest increases between May 2008 and May 2009 occurred in the Baltics: from 3.9 percent to 15.6 percent in Estonia, from 6.1 percent to 16.3 percent in Latvia and from 4.7 percent to 14.3 percent in Lithuania.

¶5. Based on EUROSTAT estimates, male unemployment reached 8.9 percent in May 2009 for the EU-27 and 9.3 percent for the euro zone, up 2.5 percentage point and up 2.6 percent respectively when compared to May 2008. The female unemployment rate for May 2009 reached 8.9 percent for the EU-27 and 9.7 percent for the euro zone, up 1.5 percentage point for both areas over the twelve-month period.

¶6. Unemployment rates among young people under 25 for May 2009 ranged from 6.6 percent in the Netherlands to 36.9 percent in Spain. The May 2009 rate for this age group was estimated at 19.5 percent for the EU-27 and at 19.6 percent for the euro zone, compared to 15.0 percent for both areas for May 2008 (plus plus 4.5 percentage point and 4.6 percentage point respectively).

¶7. EUROSTAT estimated that 21.462 million were unemployed in the EU-27 in May 2009, of which 15.013 million in the

euro zone. In absolute numbers, the number of unemployed increased by 5,111,000 for the EU-27 and by 3,400,000 for the euro zone over the twelve-month period.

18. Following is the breakdown of unemployment rates in ascending order for the individual EU member states:

(Seasonally-adjusted)

(May 2009 rates unless otherwise indicated)

Netherlands	3.2
Austria	4.3
Cyprus	5.3
Denmark	5.7
Slovenia	5.9
Czech Republic	6.1
Romania	6.2 (first quarter 2009)
Luxembourg	6.4
Bulgaria	6.5
Malta	7.1
UK	7.2 (March 2009)
Italy	7.4 (first quarter 2009)
Germany	7.7
Poland	8.1
Finland	8.1
Belgium	8.2
Greece	8.7 (first quarter 2009)
Sweden	8.9
France	9.3
Portugal	9.3
Hungary	10.2
Slovakia	11.1
Ireland	11.7

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Lithuania	14.3
Estonia	15.6
Latvia	16.3
Spain	18.7

EU-27	8.9
Euro zone	9.5

19. The monthly rates and numbers of unemployed are estimated and based on data from the EU labor force survey. The estimated rates may differ from national unemployment rates due to differences in methods and definitions of unemployment. Unemployed people according to ILO criteria are those aged 15 and over who:

- Are without work;
- Are available to start work within the next two weeks; and
- Have actively sought employment at some time during the previous four weeks.

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